

LEVEL 1 - 1 OF 8 STORIES

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December 19, 1992, Saturday, Final Edition

SECTION: METRO; PAGE B1; DOROTHY GILLIAM

LENGTH: 731 words

HEADLINE: Black Women Need a Seat At the Table

SERIES: Occasional

BYLINE: DOROTHY GILLIAM

BODY:

President-elect Clinton has said he wants to be a nontraditional president heading an administration that reflects America.

In his Cabinet appointments so far, however, he's looking pretty traditional and coming dangerously close to reflecting the current reality of America -- a country where mostly white men hold key economic, foreign policy and defense posts in government.

This is not to say that his new appointees are not planning to reach out to diverse communities. But there certainly is the appearance of "business as usual," and that is troubling to those who are not part of that configuration.

So far, a glaring omission in the president-elect's goal of being a nontraditional chief executive is the absence of a single African American female appointee to his Cabinet. Even Rep. Maxine Waters (D-Calif.), who played a key role in Clinton's election, has expressed concern about the absence to the Clinton organization.

Several months ago, the National Political Congress of Black Women formed the nonpartisan Commission for Presidential Appointment of African American Women. Late last month, the group forwarded 65 names to the transition team, including several recognized political figures.

"We have been assured by President-elect Clinton that our recommendations will be fully and fairly considered," the congress's chairwoman, C. Delores Tucker, said at the time. "{He} agrees that it is time to make women of color a more integral part of government, and to make government work for women of color of America."

But yesterday, Ramona Edelin, chairwoman of the commission, was bemoaning: "In spite of all that we did and all the public pronouncements, we've got nothing, nothing! African American women are calling our commission and Little Rock from all over the country, extremely upset about the fact that no African American women have been named to any of the Cabinet positions to date."

Clinton's apparent choice of Dr. Joycelyn Elders, an African American woman, for surgeon general is commendable, but that is not a Cabinet-level post.

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When I asked Clinton's transition communications director, George Stephanopoulos, about this, he said, "We have several high-level appointments to go, and let's wait and see what the entire Cabinet looks like."

Just as white women were not satisfied by Clinton's appointment of a mostly male economic team, African American women -- while happy about Ronald H. Brown as secretary of commerce and Jesse Brown for Veterans Affairs -- do not feel their appointments satisfy the need for a black woman to sit at the highest leadership table.

To his credit, Clinton has not named African Americans to the traditional "black" Cabinet seats -- Health and Human Services and Housing and Urban Development.

Yet, for some reason, African American women still are falling between the cracks, even though a record 86 percent of those who voted cast their ballot for Clinton. But Edelin rightly points out if that African American women are left out, Clinton's most cherished goals could be jeopardized.

"If President-elect Clinton intends to authentically address the problems and potentials of America's vastly underutilized populations of color, he will need the help of those strong, highly accomplished and committed African American women who have, for generations, served this nation as unsung heroines."

Edelin is right. It will be impossible to do what's necessary to help develop families and neighborhoods or train young people for the global marketplace without the involvement of women of color.

Clinton still has an opportunity to make an important and nontraditional appointment in the Department of Justice. Among the names of women most frequently heard for U.S. attorney general is New York Appeals Court Judge Amalya Kearse, an African American.

If Clinton really wants to break significant ground, he also will name minorities to important posts in the influential Office of Management and Budget, the agency with power over the federal budget.

Although the top posts already have been filled by whites, it's important that the agency's second tier be diverse. For, it is there that decisions are made on whether government programs -- such as low-cost housing, education, health care and minority business enterprise -- live or die.

There is still time for Clinton to redeem himself.

TYPE: COLUMN

SUBJECT: WOMEN; BLACKS; CABINET OFFICERS; APPOINTMENTS

NAMED-PERSONS: RAMONA EDELIN

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December 12, 1992, Saturday, Final Edition

SECTION: METRO; PAGE B1; DOROTHY GILLIAM

LENGTH: 630 words

HEADLINE: Norton Wins One For the District

SERIES: Occasional

BYLINE: DOROTHY GILLIAM

BODY:

When Eleanor Holmes Norton returned home to Washington from New York in 1976 to head the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, it was hard to imagine what her arrival would ultimately mean to Washington.

Even after years of outstanding federal service and her national stature as a civil rights advocate, some local voters doubted her devotion to the city when she announced her candidacy for D.C. delegate. Their misgivings deepened when she ran into income tax troubles during her campaign.

This week, D.C. residents saw a payoff that few could have envisioned when Norton was elected delegate two years ago. She has won the right to cast a vote on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives -- a right that has been denied for the last 200 years.

Thanks to Norton's shrewdness and intelligence, the long-standing insult and injustice under which this city has suffered has been partly rectified. Four U.S. territories that also will gain power because their representatives will now have a vote on the House floor have Norton to thank as well. For the first time in the history of the republic, those of us who live in the District of Columbia and the four territories have been semi-enfranchised.

Of course, this is only one step, albeit a major one, toward statehood. It is in no way a substitute.

Rep. James P. Moran Jr. (D-Va.), a statehood foe who supported giving the city a vote on the House floor, was wrong and cynical when he suggested that "to the extent that the District gets representation, it weakens their strongest argument for statehood."

That's the same as saying that if you give somebody a tiny amount of their rights, it doesn't entitle them to the rest. But Norton, a polished politician, knows that is dead wrong.

She won an increase in this city's political power and respect on the Hill by researching and developing the relevant legal doctrine and successfully arguing the case before her fellow Democrats in a closed-door session Tuesday.

It was a case of the former Georgetown University law professor using some of her greatest strengths: a keen analytical mind, expertise as a lawyer and her

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unrelenting intensity. Norton understands systems and bureaucracy.

D.C. residents' love affair with Norton started soon after her election. She reached out to every part of the city, visiting and listening to residents and keeping lines of communication open. Norton has kept her focus on the District, turning down most out-of-town engagements, except for a stint on the platform committee at the Democratic National Convention.

Earlier this year, Norton won high marks for her first term on the Hill from about 70 percent of District residents polled by The Washington Post. The continuing belief in her abilities was reflected by the fact that she received the highest citywide vote in her reelection bid last month.

She has had a direct hand in many decisions that affect the city. Working with Mayor Sharon Pratt Kelly and D.C. statehood lobbyist Jesse L. Jackson, she has put statehood on the agenda of the national Democratic Party and helped to increase the federal payment.

Just days ago, she was one of the wise political heads counseling the mayor to temporarily lay aside -- for political and strategic reasons -- her effort to institute a commuter tax.

But there are many challenges -- and perhaps a few minefields -- ahead before statehood is achieved. There are many out there who, like Moran, believe we will be appeased by receiving this long-overdue vote on the floor.

Those who believe this are mistaken and have no idea of the measure of this issue for the citizens of the District of Columbia, Jesse Jackson or Mayor Kelly.

And certainly, they do not understand the dedication of Eleanor Holmes Norton.

TYPE: COLUMN

SUBJECT: DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA; HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES; MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

NAMED-PERSONS: ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

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December 5, 1992, Saturday, Final Edition

SECTION: METRO; PAGE C1; DOROTHY GILLIAM

LENGTH: 721 words

HEADLINE: Watching Somalia With Hope, Angst

SERIES: Occasional

BYLINE: DOROTHY GILLIAM

BODY:

The United States is leading a United Nations-sanctioned mercy mission to Somalia -- a place that in its suffering may be the equivalent of Hell.

So why am I not cheering?

It is because, in the midst of the goodwill, I feel an underlying unease, even distrust. I'm no foreign policy analyst, but I've worked hard in recent days to understand and articulate these unshakable feelings.

It's a discomfort grounded in concerns about what happens when a military force goes into any country and a realization that Africa is pockmarked with the results of such ventures -- many undertaken in the name of religion and humanity.

On one hand, it is enormously gratifying to see the possibility of relief from the widespread starvation that has killed thousands.

No one who is truly human could help but be horrified by the pictures of the bloated stomachs, stick-thin limbs and haunted eyes of the children and women. Or be repulsed by the thuggish warlords who loot relief supplies, kill and plunder.

I've also duly noted the near unanimous endorsement of Operation Restore Hope by U.S. allies, African leaders and congressional and African American leaders. Even a usually abstaining China endorsed the U.N. Security Council vote to accept the U.S. offer to go to Somalia.

My disquiet comes partly because the United States has treaded a similar path before.

Although the aim of the 28,000 troops that will be deployed to Somalia will be a military-backed relief mission, not purely a military one, there's little doubt that danger and death may be necessary to protect relief workers and supplies.

In the past, the U.S. military has often gone into other countries with noble intentions, but those intentions gave way to a sullied reality.

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In the name of heroism, Mother, God and Country, U.S. men and women have been sent to war and to death, and yet we have fallen short of correcting the situation -- a roll call that includes Vietnam, Korea, Panama and even Iraq.

It would be wonderful if we knew that in Somalia the intentions and the outcome would mesh, but of course there is no such guarantee, especially in the midst of the anarchy that exists there.

What will happen the first time a warlord kills a U.S. Marine? Will U.S. flag-wavers be calling for revenge? Will the media pick up the cry, saying America must unsully its name and reputation?

And will that further erode U.S. relations with Africa -- now a history of slavery, disrespect and economic and Cold War exploitation?

My concern in this matter is not esoteric. For me, Africa is the motherland, the center of a rich civilization and culture. It is an embattled yet resource-rich continent whose history and culture are increasing in importance to many African Americans.

It appears that this military operation is one of the few times in its history that the United States was willing to act while other countries were paralyzed or cynical. This, of course, is to be commended and praised.

But we should not forget the guns that are being used in Somalia today are the guns put there by the superpowers during the Cold War exploitation of Africa.

Randall Robinson, of TransAfrica, was right when he said recently: "We have a responsibility for Somalia. It's a victim of the Cold War."

Over the years, Robinson explained, the United States and former Soviet Union put nearly a billion dollars into Somalia shoring up a cruel dictator who undermined and destroyed the civil society led by elders.

"And all of the guns that are in Somalia now, largely Soviet and American weapons, have turned this place into a dangerous arsenal," said Robinson. "This is the problem. And so we have a major responsibility for it: two thousand deaths a day."

And although Somalians share responsibility for those deaths, it is true that each time a superpower introduces sophisticated military technology into another country for its own ends, the traditional societal underpinnings have been undermined.

Vietnam, for example, is still reeling economically, socially and culturally from the U.S.-conducted war of two decades ago.

Operation Restore Hope, even though it is an adventure into uncharted territory, could help Somalia. Rarely have I hoped more that my unease is unfounded, based on the past and not the present. For that, I will be praying.

TYPE: COLUMN

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SUBJECT: SOMALIA; INTERNATIONAL RELIEF; UNITED STATES; ARMED FORCES

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November 28, 1992, Saturday, Final Edition

SECTION: METRO; PAGE B1; DOROTHY GILLIAM

LENGTH: 867 words

HEADLINE: Mending Fences In Mt. Pleasant

SERIES: Occasional

BYLINE: DOROTHY GILLIAM

BODY:

Driving through a bustling but peaceful Mount Pleasant Street Wednesday night, I could only think: You're a lucky town, D.C.!

The city had been spared a situation with the potential for violence when a mistrial was declared in the case of Daniel Enrique Gomez, the Salvadoran immigrant whose confrontation with police prompted last year's unrest.

While Latino activists are right in using the Gomez case to press city officials for more political clout and other long-range goals, city officials can do some things immediately to address the tensions within the city's most economically, racially and culturally diverse area.

For behind the explosive Gomez affair exists an "us versus them" mentality in Mount Pleasant that targets mainly the newest Latino immigrants, but also entangles issues of housing, income, race, class and culture.

The problem is rooted in the challenge of "haves" and "have-nots" living in what is essentially a small village -- an area that has not received the same level of basic services as other areas in the city.

"What some view as a cultural clash is often an economic clash," said D.C. Council member Frank Smith Jr. (D-Ward 1). "Most property owners up here are working hard, some of them maybe working two jobs. But you also have a group of highly motivated renters who, when they are able to get work, find that their interests are the same as the property owners. The economic downturn has hit so hard it is difficult to overestimate its impact."

Jose McMurray, a member of the Police Civilian Complaint Review Board and president of the Park Road Neighborhood Association, agrees with Smith that the area's basic problems are such economic inequities as joblessness and crowded living conditions. But he points to some cultural misunderstandings that exacerbate the problem.

"It's true that we have more of a tendency than North Americans to be out in the neighborhood or sit on our steps. For me it is weird that Americans do their work, go home, turn on the TV and lock themselves up. For us, what's normal is to finish work, hang out in the plaza, take our children and meet friends.

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"If everybody up here had space, a two-floor home and back yard, things would be different, but if you {are} living four to a small apartment, how realistic is it to expect people to stay inside all day and night?

"The cultural misunderstanding arises when people see guys hanging out on the streets and put them in the categories of loafers or troublemakers. But most of these people are hard-working people looking for a break."

According to one homeowner, who spoke on condition of anonymity: "I resent the fact that the Latinos make the street an extension of their home. If they're in this country, let 'em live by these rules!"

While there is no easy path to harmony between Mount Pleasant's homeowners and its renters, there are some things the city can do to foster a sense of community, and thereby increase understanding.

Of the utmost urgency is a serious commitment to foot patrols in the Mount Pleasant area.

"The Gomez case would not have happened if there had been more foot patrols," McMurray said. "The 4th District Police Department claims they have these patrols, but I don't see police walking up and down. And the homeowners would feel more comfortable walking if they saw some police."

Council member Smith agrees: "We need community policing -- some police officers on the beat who are regularly assigned to the area, who get to know people by name and face, who show some concern and caring before things happen. When you hear the sirens, you have a whole army of police, but by then it is too late."

In the wake of the trial of four officers from the Los Angeles Police Department and the verdict in the Rodney G. King case, there is a growing public perception that police departments aren't trustworthy.

Indeed, this is a problem that should concern the new District police chief, the U.S. attorney and the mayor's office. As city government officials face the challenge of how to enforce the law in such a way that the public supports the police, community policing should become an increasingly important part of law enforcement.

Moreover, if foot patrols were assigned to Mount Pleasant, they could also be put in the parks so that laws against drinking alcohol there could be better enforced. This would attract families and others who do not now feel comfortable using the parks.

The city also needs to move with urgency to clean up some of the parks in Mount Pleasant so homeowners and renters can mingle and enjoy each other's culture and each other.

"You have one or two green spots in the neighborhood," Smith said. "Instead of Mount Pleasant being a model, it looks abandoned. There is no regular maintenance."

What I'm advocating is a positive city presence in Mount Pleasant -- uniformed police officials, city maintenance workers cleaning streets, alleys

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and parks. Making the area safer and more attractive would improve the quality of life for everyone.

This doesn't take the place of political power for Latinos. But it does help defuse some of the tensions that separate neighbor from neighbor.

TYPE: COLUMN

SUBJECT: DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA; NEIGHBORHOODS; HISPANIC AMERICANS

ORGANIZATION: MOUNT PLEASANT

NAMED-PERSONS: DANIEL ENRIQUE GOMEZ

LEVEL 1 - 5 OF 8 STORIES

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SECTION: METRO; PAGE B1; DOROTHY GILLIAM

LENGTH: 662 words

HEADLINE: Stroll Spurs Hope For Great Strides

SERIES: Occasional

BYLINE: DOROTHY GILLIAM

BODY:

It was the height of symbolism. President-elect Clinton came to a struggling block of Georgia Avenue NW this week and spent two hours in face-to-face, hand-to-hand contact and conversation.

We live in an era of symbols, so it was significant that Clinton chose as one of his first acts to leave "official Washington" -- a White House meeting with President Bush -- to travel to the "other Washington."

But the people on Georgia Avenue should not get so caught up in jubilation and emotion that they mistake symbolism for reality.

Nor should Clinton make the error of believing that the jubilant reaction he received is permanent and, therefore, something he can take for granted.

"I want to see if he will come back in six months," said a grateful but skeptical John Snipes, president of the Greater U Street Business Association.

"This is the most positive sign I've seen since the Sister Souljah incident, from which I haven't fully recuperated," said Howard University professor Kenneth J. Tollett, straining his neck for a view of Clinton. "His statement was a symbolic castration of Jesse Jackson, because historically black men have not been able to protect our women and children. He went up in the polls and didn't come back down. So I'm just out here to get a feel for him."

If Clinton's visit was a signal to African Americans -- who supported him in overwhelming numbers, even though many felt that their interests were not spoken to during the campaign -- it also was partly a payoff to D.C. Council member Charlene Drew Jarvis for her long and ardent support. Jarvis, who represents the Georgia Avenue area, is being considered for a position within the Clinton administration.

Certainly, if he is modestly interested in keeping his campaign promises to help small businesses, the people's reaction should have indelibly imprinted on him how seriously they took his visit and promises.

"It gives our avenue some recognition for what we have been trying to do on upper and lower Georgia Avenue," said George Tillerson, a lawyer with offices at Georgia Avenue and Columbia Road. "We've been trying to work together for economic empowerment. The problem is capital, lines of credit. We are all

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small-business people trying to get to the point where we can go into banks and get a loan."

For Deidre T. Williams, president of the Coalition of Economic Development Organizations, the visit was "hopefully a sign that he will be committed to some innovative initiatives to support small businesses on the neighborhood level. When he says he supports job creation, the only way we do that is to establish micro-businesses and let them grow."

M.L. Clark, deputy police chief of the 4th District, also pointed to drugs and poor housing as among the corridor's biggest problems, and expressed hope that Clinton would make a concerted effort to address those issues.

"The symbolism of this visit will do a lot for this community," added Voydee Smith, a senior vice president of Industrial Bank. "He's given the people an indication that there will be some change."

The people on Georgia Avenue understood Clinton's visit for the symbolism that it was, but they appreciated it because neighborhoods like theirs have seen the greatest disinvestment in businesses and in people.

Twelve years ago, \$ 50 billion in federal money was allocated to towns and cities for priority municipal programs. By 1992, that figure had fallen to \$ 22 billion.

Clinton's message of concern for ordinary working people is important because most blacks do not live in abject poverty or situations of pathology. They are workers like most other Americans, coping against great odds. To survive they must be strong, and the hope that sustains that strength was on display during the president-elect's visit.

But having raised expectations with explicit promises made face-to-face and hand-to-hand, Clinton now has the moral, humane and political responsibility to deliver.

TYPE: COLUMN

SUBJECT: U.S. PRESIDENT; DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA; NEIGHBORHOODS

ORGANIZATION: GEORGIA AVENUE

NAMED-PERSONS: BILL CLINTON